

VZCZCXYZ0006
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLP #0117/01 0271803
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 271803Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9835
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 8762
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 6135
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0098
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 7318
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 4364
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN 0350
RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN 0930
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 4699
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 4348
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 6105
RUEHPO/AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO 0580
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 6983
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 1751
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL
RHMFIUU/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 1637
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS LA PAZ 000117

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BL](#)
SUBJECT: BOLIVIA: MUTED REACTION TO USG STATEMENTS

REF: LA PAZ 93

¶1. (U) Summary: President Evo Morales used a substantial portion of his January 22 state of the union address (marking the beginning of his fourth year in power) to repeat baseless attacks on the USG, forcing Charge to leave the speech early (reftel). After leaving the event, Charge spoke with the press, emphasizing the need for mutual respect and describing Morales attacks as unfounded and intolerable. Public reaction to Charge's statement has thus far been minimal: on January 25 Bolivia held a referendum on a new constitution, distracting attention from the bilateral interchange. Immediately after the Charge's statement, however, some public figures did comment, either supporting or attacking the Charge's statement. Newspaper editorials and opinion articles have generally taken an explanatory tone, describing the role of career diplomats in the USG and questioning how President Morales can expect better relations with the Obama Administration when he continues to attack the USG. Morales reacted positively to the State Department's congratulations on the referendum. End summary.

- - - - -
Morales's Team Defends Him, Criticizes Charge
- - - - -

¶2. (U) Defense Minister Walker San Miguel attempted to defend Morales's attacks, saying that the speech had only been a recounting of past actions and "wasn't aggressive." Presidential spokesman Ivan Canelas criticized the Charge's statement as "not very diplomatic" while describing it as "an understandable attitude" because the Charge "is a functionary of the Bush government in the United States" and because "he worked with Ambassador Goldberg."

- - - - -
Diplomacy 101
- - - - -

¶3. (U) Analysts and politicians attempted to explain the role of career diplomats in the U.S. Foreign Service after

Canelas' statements. As explained by Radio Fides commentator Nicolas Sanabria: "Krishna Urs will stay with Obama...he can stay with the next government because that is what the Americans have achieved. It's not like in a country where diplomats are all appointed, so if a government leaves, the diplomat also has to leave...Krishna Urs doesn't represent the government of Bush, he represents the U.S. people. Just to clarify...because sometimes someone speaks without knowing. They thought that they were attacking Goldberg, the Bush government, but nevertheless, Urs represents Barack Obama." PODEMOS senator and President of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee Tito Hoz de Vila clarified, "Diplomats do not represent governments, but rather the State...in developed democracies such as the United States, Europe, or even neighboring countries such as Brazil and Chile, career diplomats are not representatives of the President's political party."

- - - - -
Opposition Laments Increasing Isolation
- - - - -

¶4. (U) Opposition PODEMOS congressman Bernardo Montenegro lamented Morales' attacks: "Unfortunately the President (Morales) as usual makes irrational and poor declarations. The things he said about the United States were totally uncalled for and prove that we are becoming increasingly isolated...in a few months Bolivia will only have a few friends left in the world and those will be terrorist countries such as Iran, Libya, and Venezuela." President of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee Tito Hoz de Vila remarked on January 22 that in one day, the government had made a complete about face: "Yesterday, the Foreign Minister and the government said that they want to improve relations with the United States and today they attack it...What the government has now done after President (Morales)'s remarks is bury their previous statements. Yesterday they said they wanted to improve relations, and today they are slinging mud."

- - - - -
Morales "Encouraged" By State Department Statement
- - - - -

¶5. (U) Leading dailies published the official State Department congratulations regarding Bolivia's peaceful January 25 constitutional referendum. In an interview with a Cuban state television program, President Morales expressed his approval: "I feel that the message of the new president--Barack Obama--of the new U.S government is encouraging. We hope that that message permits respect for the will of the people and also the deepening of democracy, as we are doing in Bolivia." In a Bolivian radio interview, Internal Trade Vice Minister Pablo Guzman announced that "one of the most important objectives of our conversations with the United States will be the interchange of ambassadors, possibly in the next months." La Paz daily La Razon pointed out that these bilateral interchanges come less than five months after Morales expelled Ambassador Goldberg.
URS